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SOCIOLOGICAL NOTES.

Proposed Changes in Massachusetts Poor Laws.*—The State Board of Lunacy and Charity in Massachusetts in its Nineteenth Annual Report† recommends that the care of all indigent and neglected children be entrusted to the state, irrespective of the question of their (city or town) settlement. As a matter of fact the majority of pauper children are now state charges. The exceptions are cases due to loss of parents or to parents' poverty where the settlement of parents is known. It is certain that the minority looked after by overseers of the poor will be much more wisely cared for if they are transferred. It is interesting, by the way, to note that the relative percentages of children under state care who are in institutions, self-supporting in families or at board in families remains about the same as in 1896. The percentages for the last three years are significant:

	1895.	1896.	1897.
In Institutions	16	16	15
In Families (without board)	56	55	55
In Families (with board)	28	29	30

It would thus appear that the necessary use of institutions has been minimized about as far as it can be under present conditions. Of course it must be remembered that juvenile delinquents, who must in nearly all cases be given at least a short training in institutions before being placed out or returned to their families, are included in this 15 per cent.

The board also recommends that the city and town pauper insane be transferred to state institutions and state control. At present these unfortunates may be boarded at town expense in the state asylums, but the overseers may, if they chose, board them in families or keep them in city and town almshouses. Thus in 1897, there were 907 in the almshouses. The boarding in families is coming to be recognized as a very good way of dealing with certain classes of insane. But it is doubtful if the overseers have sufficient scientific knowledge to exercise a wise control in this matter, and certainly the use of almshouses for confinement is an unmixed evil. The fact that a reform of this sort has come so late in so progressive a state as Massachusetts is probably another bit of evidence of the survival of the old New England town idea.

* Contributed by Mr. F. H. McLean, Fellow in Sociology, University of Pennsylvania.

† 1897. Boston. Pp. 229, lxxxii.

For those interested in laws of settlement the following will be of moment: The board recommends that the statutes be so amended that any adult living in any place in the state for three consecutive years shall gain a settlement; that legitimate children shall follow the settlement of their parents and that all persons absent from the state for ten consecutive years shall thereby lose their settlements.

Abuses in New York Charities.*—In its report for the year 1897, lately transmitted to the legislature, the State Board of Charities gives credence to a statement which has been going the rounds for some time to the effect that probably nearly 50 per cent of the population of New York City obtain practically free medical treatment. The volume of work carried on by dispensaries is indicated in figures like these: "In the borough of Manhattan there are 66 or more dispensaries and from 57 of these the board has received reports for the past year. These reports show 1,043,428 cases treated and 1,674,280 prescriptions furnished, an average of 18,305 cases and 29,373 prescriptions to each dispensary." The reason why the board cannot definitely fix the number of dispensaries is because some of them are not incorporated and do not therefore come to the notice of the board. The board is still continuing its efforts for legislation which will give it control over dispensaries throughout the state. Till then, gross abuse of medical charities will probably continue.

Apparently there is also a considerable overgrowth of institutions for children, for the board states that there are now probably 4000 vacant beds in such institutions within New York City. Of course money for the establishment of juvenile institutions can probably be obtained with greater ease than for many other charities. But the waste indicated in the above figures is certainly a striking one when it is remembered that there is a dearth of homes for the aged in the same city.

The board's control does not extend beyond incorporated charities or those applying for incorporation. It has begun to recognize that some charities who do not come into this category are carrying on unwise work. Therefore it has very pertinently asked the question: "Should unincorporated charities be permitted to exist?" The report thus argues: "Charitable organizations voluntarily seek to perform a quasi-public service when they undertake to relieve the poor and when their work is wisely planned and properly directed, they are frequently capable of doing much good. If the contrary

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be true, however, as often proves to be the case, their efforts commonly serve to aggravate and increase the very evils they are intended to alleviate, thus adding to the burden of taxation which falls upon the industrious, and lowering the character of the state's citizenship. Obviously under these circumstances the state is directly interested to a very marked extent and possesses the power and the right to seek out and apply reasonable and adequate remedies."

But perhaps the worst abuses which the board has discovered during the year are those connected with the placing out of children—abuses which have induced it to champion a bill making it unlawful for either public or private corporations, institutions or societies or private persons "to place out in families or in private or other homes in this state, or elsewhere from this state, by indenture or otherwise, any orphan, abandoned or destitute child, except such child be so placed out in accordance with rules and regulations to be established by the State Board of Charities." A special committee of the board made an investigation of the subject during the year and from the testimony adduced it appears that not only are a number of well-meaning philanthropic societies engaging in the work with more or less intelligence and care, but there are also some individuals who are conducting it as a pure matter of business. The latter take the children from those responsible for their care for a money consideration, and of course do not care particularly where they place them. It is apparent how under such conditions, gross abuses will rise. If the board does not obtain full control of the matter, by adequate legislation, it is probable that this system of caring for pauper children in New York will be greatly discredited by the discovery and public revelation of bad cases of cruelty, neglect and immorality.

At the time of this writing a compromise bill has been finally passed, and is awaiting the veto or approval of the governor. It provides for the general regulating of placing out. In general, it decrees that individuals, incorporated societies and *non-charitable* incorporated societies engaged in this work must be licensed by the State Board of Charities, and that *incorporated charitable* societies who abuse their privileges may be prohibited further activity in this direction, such prohibition being subject to review by the Supreme Court. The bill regulating dispensaries was finally buried in an assembly committee.

The Development of the Poor Law in England since 1885.—Under this title Dr. P. F. Aschrott, the author of that excellent and widely used book entitled "The English Poor Law System," has

recently published in Schmoller's *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung** a review of the discussion and legislation on this subject in England during the past ten years. Probably no period in the history of the English Poor Law has been more fruitful of active and far-reaching discussion on this subject, certainly not since the two decades preceding the adoption of the law of 1834. Dr. Aschrott occupies a high position in the administrative system of Germany as *Landgerichtsrat* in Berlin. He has, moreover, spent considerable time in England studying not merely the details of the English administrative system, but also its social conditions, and his opinion of the significance of recent changes, especially the changes in the attitude of the general public toward the poor law in England, is therefore of interest to many persons. Naturally, his monograph is intended chiefly to inform his own countrymen of the conditions in England with a view to suggesting their bearing upon German conditions. He begins with some account of the way in which the fundamental principle of English poor law, as laid down in the fundamental law of 1834, has been attacked on all sides, especially by socialists and collectivists in recent years, and he views with evident satisfaction the result, namely, that although several commissions have investigated the matter and have printed long and valuable documentary testimony, the results as embodied in legislation have merely remedied evils connected with the administration of the older laws and have not in any way modified the fundamental principle of the English poor law. He calls particular attention to the way in which special demands for relief, particularly those arising from periods when non-employment was more general than usual, were met by such temporary facilities as the Mansion House Relief Fund. He finds that this distribution of relief, as is usually the experience elsewhere in similar cases, was very poorly executed and did very considerable harm. He also calls attention to the fact that after careful consideration of the Elberfeld system in the various cities of Germany that the local government board decided that the results did not justify any general introduction of such a system into England. Many of the important points brought out in the report of the Poor Relief Commission of 1888† and in the report of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor ‡ constitute an invaluable source of information for all students not merely of poor relief questions, but also of existing social conditions in England.

Speaking in general of the results of the recent agitation and of

* Reprinted in pamphlet form. Pp. 68. Leipzig: Duncker & Humboldt, 1898.

† Parliamentary Papers, 1888, No. 363.

‡ Ibid, 1895, No. 7684.

the changes introduced in consequence, Dr. Aschrott considers a most important gain to have been the enlarged work which women are permitted to do in connection with the administration of the poor law. They are not only now permitted to vote for poor relief officers, but are eligible for election to most of the local boards and also to appointment as relief officers.

In the second part of his monograph, Dr. Aschrott has discussed at some length the minor administrative changes of recent years, grouping them under the following heads: (1) The workhouse principle and outdoor relief; (2) administration of workhouses; (3) provision for poor children; (4) provision for the sick poor; (5) the casual poor. These divisions correspond with divisions in the author's larger book and will enable those who use that work, either in the original German edition or in the English translation, to have the material brought down to date. In the third and closing section, some half dozen pages are devoted to recent statistics of various kinds of poor relief in England and some little discussion of the fundamental aspects of the present laws.

Improved Housing.—The Board of Directors of the City and Suburban Homes Company in New York City presented its Second Annual Report on May 5, 1898, in which it shows a very considerable activity and a generally prosperous condition in the affairs of the company. Five per cent interest was paid to shareholders on March 1 upon instalments on account of subscription to the capital stock. Of the total amount of stock allotted in January, 1897, five thousand shares of the par value of \$10 each were reserved for the benefit of persons who might desire them but who had not previously subscribed. This was done with a view to extending the number of stockholders and thus interesting a wider public in the affairs of the company. Of this amount of reserve stock, all but 193 shares have been recently allotted. The company also proposes to increase its capital stock to \$2,000,000 and this amount was approved at a meeting held on April 25. The first block of homes constructed by the company are known as the "Alfred Corning Clark Buildings," and cover nineteen city lots on West Sixty-eighth and Sixty-ninth streets between Amsterdam and West End avenues, New York City. This site is on the outskirts of the tenement region of the upper west side. It commands good transportation facilities and is within six blocks of the most densely crowded tenement block in the whole city. The following statement will give some idea of the arrangement of these buildings and of the methods adopted in their management:

"The buildings contain in all three hundred and seventy-three

apartments, four stores and an office. Seventy-four apartments are of two rooms, two hundred and thirty-six of three rooms, sixty-one of four rooms and two of five rooms. Every apartment is a complete home in itself, has an abundance of light and air, with thorough ventilation, and with partitions between the different dwellings deafened. Each apartment has its own water-closet, well ventilated and with water supply from tank; stationary wash-tubs and sink of large size; hot water supply from a central boiler system; gas fixtures and gas attachment to stove or range; closets or wardrobes and dresser, and mantel shelves. Dust chutes have been placed on each floor; a number of spray baths, free for the use of tenants, on the first story; and in the basement, laundries with set tubs to which hot and cold water are supplied, and steam-heated drying chambers, also free for tenants, and wood and coal closet and storage-rooms. Staircases and stair walls are entirely fire-proof, as are likewise the walls of the first story and the dividing walls between each group of apartments. Halls and stairways are well lighted and steam-heated.

"The best sanitary principles have been considered in the construction of these city homes. The use of good materials; a perfect system of drainage; abundance of light, air and water; avoidance of dark rooms and passages; wide, clean and airy halls and stairways, make them healthy, comfortable and desirable for families who wish to live privately and respectably at moderate rents.

"The comfort and welfare of tenants are sought by providing a thoroughly competent management. It is believed that the disagreeable features of ordinary tenement life will through this means be avoided. A few general rules have been established for the good of all. Applicants for apartments must furnish at least two satisfactory references, as well as evidence that they have been accustomed to pay rents regularly.

"This group is divided into nine buildings. One of the buildings, comprising about forty apartments, was thrown open for occupancy on February 15 last; another, about March 1; another about March 15; two more about April 1, and the remainder about April 10. The builders did not fully complete their work until April 23. On April 30, two hundred and seventy of the three hundred and seventy-three apartments and three stores had been let—a remarkable showing considering that the tenants are selected under strict rules as to reference and previous rent paying, enjoined by the management. The total possible rental of occupied apartments up to April 30 last was \$3638.66, and of this amount \$3625.16 was paid, leaving but \$13.50 of arrears. Of this latter sum, \$3 were

irrecoverable arrears, the balance, \$10.50, representing simply a failure to pay in advance. Rents are collected weekly, in advance, collection being made in the apartments by a woman rent-collector and her assistant. Up to April 30, there had been four changes of tenancy; one was brought about by the death of the tenant's wife, another by removal from the city, a third by a notice to quit and the fourth by voluntary removal. All of the apartments were immediately re-let.

"The rentals charged are less per square foot than are asked, but without the same conveniences and sanitary advantages, in the adjoining neighborhood, and slightly lower than the rates obtaining on Amsterdam avenue in the immediate vicinity. The two-room and five-room apartments are fully let, and a waiting list is on file. All but ten of the four-room apartments have been rented. Ninety-three of the one hundred and three unoccupied apartments are of three rooms, but this is not remarkable, considering the very large proportion of this size. Applications are being steadily received, and undoubtedly in a short space of time the buildings will be full.

"The expenses of management have not exceeded original calculations, so that when apartments are fully occupied, the returns will be sufficient to pay a five per cent dividend upon the capital cost and to provide a safe surplus."

A suburban colony of homes is being developed on the vast estate known as Homewood in the Thirtieth ward of the borough of Brooklyn. Here a tract comprising five hundred and thirty city lots is owned, and the following statement from the report gives an idea of the nature and extent of the work planned for and partially constructed in that section:

"A survey has been made, streets and an avenue cut through and graded, and sewers, water and gas fully laid. The work of macadamizing the streets, laying gutters, curbs and sidewalks, and planting trees and hedges, is now proceeding. When completed, Homewood will be an ideal suburban village.

"Homewood enjoys excellent transportation facilities, two lines of trolley cars running directly to Park Row, Manhattan. The fare is five cents. Homewood maintains a sewerage plant constructed on Colonel Waring's system of sewage disposal by bacterial oxidation, so that cesspools, the bugbear and danger of suburban residence, have been dispensed with.

"Sixty-five cottages have been erected, fifty-four of which have been sold to purchasers on the twenty-year instalment plan, with life insurance. These houses have been built by the Sturgis and

Hill Company, from designs prepared by Mr. Percy Griffin. They are either entirely of brick, or first-story brick and second story stucco and half timber, or entirely of stucco. There are no frame buildings. The style of architecture is exceedingly tasteful, unified without being uniform. A well-known real estate editor has described Homewood as a Shakespearean village. The aptness of his characterization, technically considered, is complete. The architect and the builders deserve recognition for their good work.

"The company has made such favorable contracts, that houses can be profitably erected and sold for less than ordinary rates. Current inquiry and demand seem to indicate that Homewood is likely to develop rapidly and to yield the company substantial returns.

"The average price of cottages already sold is \$3100. This includes cost of land, buildings, grading, paving, curbing, macadamizing, sewers and all improvements. The average monthly instalment paid by purchasers is a little over \$25. This sum includes paying back the principal in twenty years, with interest at six per cent upon deferred payments, and the premium on a life insurance policy. Up to April 30 last, one hundred and twenty of the five hundred and thirty lots had been built upon. The four hundred and ten lots which remain cost the company about two-thirds the price at which fairly well situated property in the neighborhood, without improvements, is now being sold."

The company owns other tracts of land which will be improved in time as its business expands and the demand seems to warrant. Many persons interested in similar work are watching this experiment, conducted as it is under the skilled supervision of Dr. E. R. L. Gould, the president of the company, in the hopes that it will prove a model that can be easily adapted to local conditions elsewhere than in New York City.

Municipal and County Charities in the United States.—The recent quarter-centennial meeting of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, which was held in New York City in May, one of the sections of which Mr. Homer Folks, Secretary of the State Charities Aid Association of New York, was chairman, presented a report on "Municipal and County Charities (including Public Outdoor Relief)."^{*} In addition to a general statement concerning recent experience in dealing with the problems of charity in large cities, the report contains an account of the charitable activities of the seventy-three cities in the United States which, according to the census of 1890, each had a population of more than 40,000. These reports from the various cities contain many items of

* Pp. 79. Boston: Geo. H. Ellis, 1898.

general interest concerning both the methods of administration and the actual outlay for some of the more important items of expenditure.

In the general report Mr. Folks has devoted himself very largely to municipal charities, although three topics were assigned to the committee, namely, municipal charities, county charities and public outdoor relief. The restriction of the topic was due to the fact that in the past the conference has devoted considerable attention and published many valuable papers on public outdoor relief and on county charities, while the administration of charity in the larger cities has been generally treated with less fullness. Mr. Folks says, "So far as charity has become a distinctly municipal undertaking, it has shared the general character of the administration of the municipality. The cities that have been notorious for inefficiency and corruption have had corrupt and inefficient departments of charities, and untold sufferings have thus been inflicted upon the recipients of so-called public charity, which, in some cases, might more truly have been called public cruelty."

Then follows some reference to a few of the more notable public scandals in the administration of charities, and continuing Mr. Folks adds: "But, if municipal charities have shared in the evils of our cities, they also share in that wonderful revival of interest in city government which we have witnessed in the last few years. In several cities this has passed beyond the realm of discussion, and comprehensive movements for the organization of municipal charities upon a more rational basis have been carried to success."

Speaking of the two recent experiments of special interest, namely, the reorganization of charities in New York and Boston, the following statement is made: "In one respect, at least, there is uniformity in these movements. Everywhere the tendency is toward a differentiation of the different classes cared for at public expense, and the placing of each distinct class under the management of a separate official responsibility. The lack of classification, one of the evils pointed out in 1888, is being corrected. The destitute, the insane and the criminal are the three generally recognized classes of public dependents. During the past three years New York City has made an absolute division of these three classes. In the place of its former Department of Charities and Correction, it has a Department of Public Charities and a Department of Correction, and has turned over its insane to the care of the state. More recently Boston has adopted a somewhat similar plan, but has carried the sub-division still farther. It has five departments—for adult paupers, for destitute children, for the insane, for criminals and a

separate department for investigation, registration, etc. The City Hospital of Boston, it is to be remembered, has long been under an administration entirely separate from that of the almshouse; and they are thoroughly dissociated in the public mind. Chicago, or rather Cook County, as we have already seen, has its almshouse, insane asylum and county hospital under one management, and, as if that were not bad enough, asks the same Board of Commissioners to build roads and bridges and to perform other important duties.

"As to what constitutes the most efficient governing authority of a charities department, there are two distinct tendencies—one looking toward administration by a board of unpaid trustees, from five to nine in number, similar to boards of trustees of state institutions; the other looking toward a concentration of responsibility in the hands of one, or at most three salaried commissioners, bringing this department into line with most other city departments. Philadelphia with its board of five unpaid commissioners, Boston with its three boards each of seven unpaid trustees, Baltimore with its newly authorized board of nine unpaid supervisors of charities and San Francisco with its unpaid health department in charge of its charities, have chosen the former of these two plans. New York with its three salaried commissioners with separate and sharply defined administrative jurisdiction in different boroughs, St. Louis with its four charitable institutions under the control of a salaried health commissioner and Cleveland with its salaried director of charities and correction, have chosen the latter plan.

"Each of the two plans has its evident advantages and its peculiar dangers. Either plan will secure good results if administered by persons of character and intelligence who have knowledge of, and interest in the subject of charity. Either plan will fail miserably in the hands of incompetent, indifferent or dishonest administrators. The merit of either plan lies largely in its influence upon the character of the appointments that are likely to be made under it.

"One very important advantage claimed for the unpaid board of trustees is that it lessens the probability of partisan appointments. If the unpaid board were certain to accomplish this result, there could be no doubt as to its desirability. Experience has shown, however, that unpaid boards have not always proved a sure means of escape from the spoils system. There have been unpaid boards of trustees that were neither wise, high-minded nor non-partisan. In fact, of all administrations, that of an unpaid committee or board composed of party workers whose political service had to receive some slight recognition, is the weakest, flabbiest and least

effective. Accepting the positions for the patronage and public notice involved, such appointees, receiving no salary, do not often feel called upon to give much service in return.

"But, while the unpaid board does not offer a sure means of escape from politics, it probably does make good appointments more probable. A few administrations are so hopelessly political that they will appoint none but party workers even to unpaid places. A few mayors there are (may their tribe increase!) who will appoint the best men to either unpaid or paid positions. Between these two extremes there are doubtless many appointing powers who would feel that they could safely appoint persons of special fitness to unpaid positions, but who would fear that they could not make a satisfactory explanation to the party leaders if the positions carried salaries. Another advantage of the unpaid board is its presumably wider knowledge and greater wisdom in passing upon the delicate and complicated questions involved in the administration of charity.

"The dangers of the unpaid board arise from a division of responsibility, which too frequently leads to inaction or to hesitation and halfway measures. There is also a very real danger of placing in the hands of volunteers duties more arduous and exacting than they can be expected to perform for any considerable period of time.

"The advantages of concentrating power and responsibility in the hands of one salaried official are evidently promptness and the opportunity for executive ability to reap its full fruition without let or hindrance. The plan is in line with the general system of municipal government in this country, so far as we have any system, though directly opposed to that of Great Britain and the Continental cities. In our cities we have freely abolished boards and committees, have curtailed the powers of boards of aldermen and common councils as to appointment and confirmation of heads of departments, and have concentrated responsibility in the hands of a mayor and his appointees. It may be a mistake; but it has been our general policy up to this time. It frankly accepts the risks of partisan appointments, and relies for its ultimate success upon the virtue of holding the one responsible official face to face with his responsibility from day to day, week to week and month to month.

"The practical operations of the plan adopted by New York in 1895, and of that adopted by Boston in 1897, will be watched with very great interest, and may afford data for a more definite conclusion than can now be reached as to their comparative merits. For the present we may profitably withhold decision, and each use his best efforts to make the system under which he finds himself working bear its best fruits.

"It would be easy, however, to lay too much emphasis upon the particular form of organization of the department and too little upon the extent of public interest in its work. The recent reorganizations in Boston and New York have led to many desirable results; but is this not due in some measure to an increased public interest aroused in the process of securing the legislative reforms and resulting in a more general willingness to give personal service to public institutions? In fact, almost any change that is brought about by an enlightened public sentiment breaking through the force of tradition and precedent, is bound to be beneficial. Whatever makes the community better informed about a municipal department makes that community more exacting in its demands and more willing to approve liberal expenditures. However much municipal charities have suffered from poor organization, from the commingling of diverse and unrelated interests, they have suffered most of all from lack of a widespread, intelligent, earnest, persistent, wisely directed public sentiment."

Convict Labor and Employment of Foreigners.—The General Court of Massachusetts at its session in 1897, passed an order directing the General Superintendent of Prisons to examine the various methods of employing prisoners on public works and lands, and to submit a special report on this subject to the General Court of 1898. This report, which has just been published under the title of "Special Report of the General Superintendent of Prisons in Massachusetts upon the Various Methods of Employing Prisoners on Public Works and Lands,"* makes just the sort of pamphlet that students of this subject will want to consult in order to find in brief space a general summary of what has been done in this line. Mr. F. G. Pettigrove, the General Superintendent of Prisons, has not attempted an exhaustive inquiry, but has succeeded in furnishing a very readable document. He refers to other sources of information on this subject, namely, the Second Annual Report of the United States Commissioner of Labor, issued in 1897, and more especially a document relating to road work done by convicts, which was issued by the United States Department of Agriculture under the title of "Notes on the Employment of Convicts in Connection with Road Building," prepared in 1895 by General Roy Stone.

Mr. Pettigrove's report contains several fine illustrations, and discusses convict work under three heads: (1) Farming; (2) Road Work, and (3) Public Works in General. In the first section particular attention is given to the state of affairs in North Carolina, where, under specially favorable conditions, agricultural employ-

* 1898. Boston. Pp. 50.

ment can be relied upon to furnish full occupation for convicts; but, of course, for only part of the year. The work in Georgia is also discussed and the reasons for the proposed change in the system of hiring out convicts, as has been suggested by the Governor of Georgia. The most successful road work seems to have been done in North Carolina, and the most extensive employment of convicts on public works in general, in foreign countries. The difficulties in applying any of these suggestions to certain of the Northern States, especially in Massachusetts, are discussed at some length, and the opinion of the General Superintendent seems to be that, so far as Massachusetts is concerned, the most advisable steps would be in the direction of preparing the material for road-building and in reclaiming waste lands. He also discusses the question of building a ship canal across Cape Cod, which proposition meets with his approval.

The Pulpit and Social Problems.—This is the title of a new publication devoted to social and economic questions, especially in their ethical relations. It is a monthly magazine published by Rev. J. E. Scott, 14 Grant avenue, San Francisco, Cal. The first number, bearing the date March 15, 1898, contains articles by Professor George D. Herron, Professor Edward A. Ross, Dr. J. H. W. Stuckenbergh, President E. Benjamin Andrews, and other well-known writers.